

# **Freshwater Fishing in Virginia**

January 1-December 31, 2008



**[www.HuntFishVA.com](http://www.HuntFishVA.com)**



A publication of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

# About the Department

Serving the outdoor public since 1916, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries continues to move forward with renewed vigor and an encouraging sense of accomplishment.

Fisheries annually stocks over 1.2 million trout into 600 miles of trout streams and raises 13-15 million warmwater fish for stocking in our other lakes and rivers. The Department owns and operates 37 public fishing lakes and manages the fisheries in virtually all major fresh waters of the state. That's over 176,000 acres in lakes and ponds, over 25,000 miles of fishable warmwater streams and rivers, and over 2,800 miles of trout waters. In order to provide access to these waters, the Department operates and maintains 215 launching ramps.

It takes work to maintain a plentiful supply of wildlife. Multiple wildlife projects are ongoing and hundreds of jobs happen every day that often go unnoticed. The Department maintains over 1,000 miles of road and keeps up with more than 5,000 informational

signs, along with nearly 200,000 acres of land on 36 management areas that are kept open and in good shape for public use.

A big part of Virginia's wildlife abundance results from the work of the Virginia conservation police, who annually check over 54,000 hunters, more than 75,000 anglers, and at least 30,000 boaters as they patrol over 3,000,000 miles annually.

All of this work to keep fish and game abundant in Virginia is paid for by the hunters, anglers, and wildlife enthusiasts themselves. The Department receives almost 100 percent of its funds from hunting and fishing licenses, boat titling and registration fees, state sales taxes from hunting, fishing, and wildlife watching equipment, and Federal Aid in Sport Fish and Wildlife Restoration Funds from the sale of fishing and hunting equipment and motor boat fuel.

Be sure to buy your license before going fishing. Hope you have safe and enjoyable fishing trips.

If you have questions or need assistance, contact the office nearest you.

## Richmond Headquarters

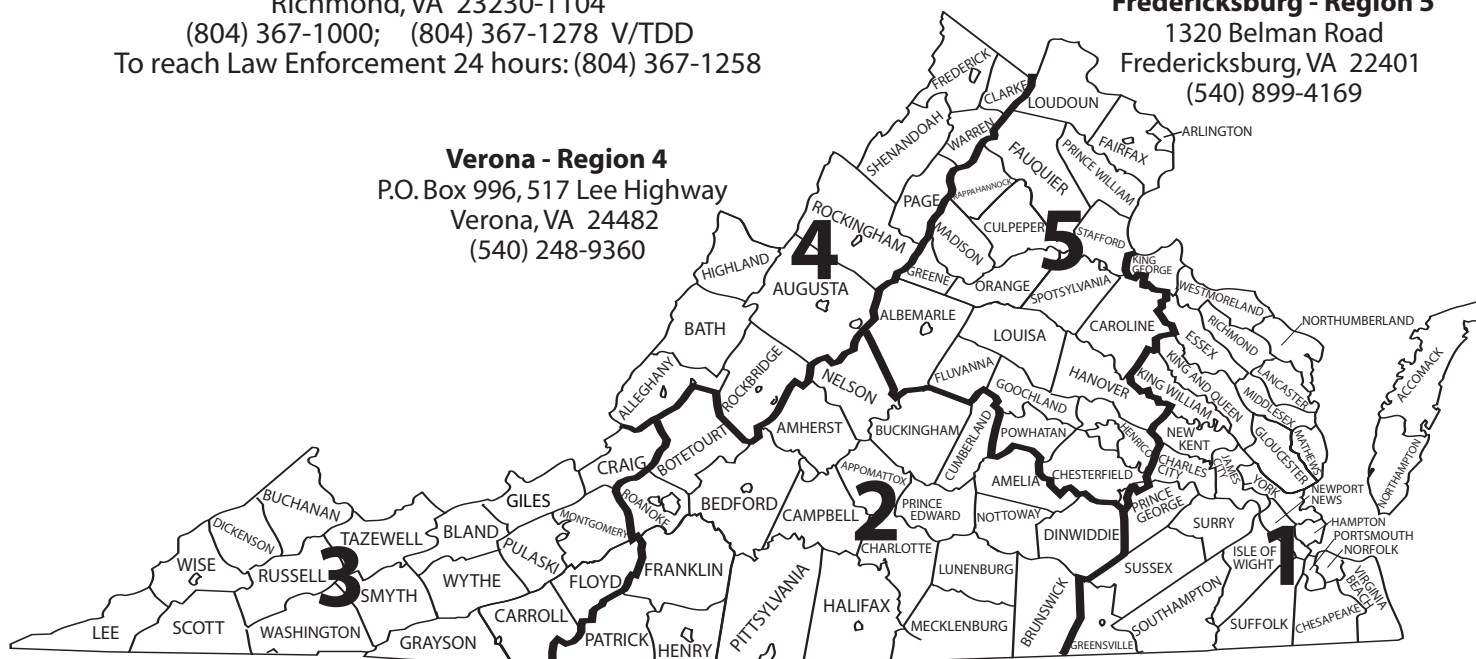
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## Mission Statement

*To manage Virginia's wildlife and inland fish to maintain optimum populations of all species to serve the needs of the Commonwealth; to provide opportunity for all to enjoy wildlife, inland fish, boating and related outdoor recreation; to promote safety for persons and property in connection with boating, hunting and fishing.*

# Commonwealth of Virginia

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This booklet is for general information. Specific laws are found in the Code of Virginia or the Game Department Regulation Manual. For answers to specific questions about fishing, contact the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries office nearest you.

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Cover: Fishing along the James River in Botetourt County. ©Dwight Dyke



## Virginia's Sport Fish Program and YOU

Anglers like you make it possible for Virginia to enjoy exceptional fishing and boating opportunities. Through the Federal Aid in Sport Fish Restoration

Program, you help the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and Virginia Marine Resources Commission make fishing and boating even better each time you buy a fishing reel, fishing lure, trolling motor, or gas for your boat.

When you buy fishing equipment or gas for your boat, a portion of the federal tax goes to the Sport Fish Restoration Program. Virginia annually receives about \$5.7 million of that money, which pays 75 percent of many of the fish management and boat access projects to improve your angling pleasure.



# What's New

The following fishing regulation changes are new beginning January 1, 2008. More details can be found in sections that follow this summary.

## Game/Sport Fish Regulations

- South Fork Holston and Middle Fork Holston rivers have the same walleye 18-inch minimum length limit as South Holston Reservoir (see table page 12).
- Demarcation lines for the “No possession (catch and release only)” regulation for American and Hickory Shad have been corrected (see table page 14).
- The creel and length limits for anadromous (coastal) river herring (alewife and blue back herring) above and below the fall line in all rivers of the Chesapeake Bay are set by VMRC (see table page 14).
- There is “no possession” of river herring (alewife and blue-back herring) for the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing, and Northwest rivers (see table on page 14).

## Trout Regulations

- Culling of trout in designated stocked trout waters, including Urban Trout Waters, is no longer legal. Once a trout is taken into possession by placing in the creel (basket, bucket, stringer, cooler, etc.) it becomes part of the daily creel limit and may not be released (culled) (see page 15).
- A multiple number of single-hook lures (such as dropper flies), fished in a series, can be used in single-hook artificial lure special regulation trout waters (see page 15).
- The Shenandoah National Park has passed new trout regulations for 2008 (see page 15 for details).
- There is no longer a special 2 per day trout creel limit at Philpott Reservoir.
- Artificial lures with multiple hooks, not just single-hook lures, can be used on the Jackson River 16-inch minimum, 2 trout per day special regulation trout section in Bath County (see page 16).
- Trout stockings will be reduced while Coursey Springs Hatchery is being renovated. (See trout guide for more details, page 50.)

## Nongame Fish, Reptiles, Amphibians, and Aquatic Invertebrates

- Note changes under the heading Game/Sport Fish Regulations for anadromous river herring (Also, see table on page 14).
- Snapping turtles can now be taken for personal use using turtle traps (hoop nets) not exceeding 6 feet in length with a throat opening not exceeding 36 inches (see page 18).
- Bow and arrow fishing has been amended to include only common carp, and not grass carp, add northern snakehead along with common carp and gar. Crossbows are now allowed (see page 18).

- Native amphibians and reptiles that are legally captured in Virginia and possessed live for private use and not for sale may be liberated back into the wild under certain conditions (see page 18).
- Chinese mitten crab (*Briocheir sinensis*) has been added to the list of non-native animals that cannot be imported, possessed or sold in Virginia without a permit from DGIF (see page 19).

# Fishing License Information and Fees

## Residency Qualifications:

- (1) persons who have been a bonafide resident of the city, county, or state for six consecutive months immediately preceding the date of application for license;
- (2) persons who have been domiciliary residents of the state for at least two months upon approval of a completed affidavit to be furnished by the Game Department;
- (3) legal voters in Virginia;
- (4) members of the armed forces if they reside in the Commonwealth and are on active duty and are stationed at military installations within, or on ships based in the Commonwealth;
- (5) students (including nonresident students boarding on campus) residing in Virginia who are enrolled in bonafide Virginia schools;
- (6) unnaturalized owners of real property in Virginia who have resided in a county for five years immediately prior to making application for a license may apply for resident licenses only in the county where they qualify.

Every person who is required to have a license must carry such license and shall show the license immediately upon demand of any officer whose duty it is to enforce the game and inland fish laws, or upon the demand of any owner or lessee, or any employee or representative of such owner or lessee, upon whose land or water such person may be hunting, trapping or fishing.

No state or county resident license to hunt, trap or fish in or on the lands or inland waters of this Commonwealth shall be deemed to be issued until the certificate printed on the reverse side of that license shall have been signed by the named licensee.

## Exceptions

**All persons, except those listed below, must purchase the proper licenses before fishing.**

- Resident or non-resident landowners, their spouses, their children and grandchildren and the spouses of such children and grandchildren, or the landowner's parents, resident or non-resident, do not need a license to hunt, trap or fish within the boundaries of their own lands and inland waters.
- Residents under 16 years of age (also do not need a trout license).
- Tenants, on the land they rent and occupy, are not required to have a license, but must have the written permission of the landowner.
- Guests fishing in individually owned private ponds.

## How to Obtain a License

There are four ways to get your fishing license:

- ♦ Online: At the Department's Web site. Select the license(s) you want, pay with your VISA or MasterCard, and print your license(s) after you pay.
- ♦ In Person: Sold by some clerks of the Circuit Court and hundreds of license agents located around the state.
- ♦ By Mail: Download and complete the proper form from the Department's Web site and mail it to the address provided.
- ♦ By Phone: Customer Service at 1-866-721-6911, Monday–Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

- Non-resident children under 12 (except in designated stocked trout waters) when accompanied by a properly licensed adult.
- Legally blind persons.
- Any Indian who "habitually" resides on an Indian reservation or a member of the Virginia recognized tribes who resides in the Commonwealth is not required to have a license; however, such Indian must have on his person an identification card or paper signed by the chief of his tribe, a valid tribal identification card, written confirmation through a central tribal registry, or certification from a tribal office.

## License Year

All fishing licenses sold are valid for one year from the date of purchase.

## Replacement License

If a license is lost, a duplicate license can be obtained from any license agent.

## Customer Service Center for Purchasers of Fishing Licenses.

A customer service center has been established to help purchasers of hunting and fishing licenses. The center will be open from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday, except holidays. The customer service center phone number is 1-866-721-6911 or e-mail: customerservice@dgif.virginia.gov. Representatives at the center will be available to answer questions about licensing, assist you in purchasing the licenses appropriate for your hunting or fishing outing, correct information on a current license or re-issue a lost license.

**It is unlawful to fish on waters of any public or private club, association or preserve without a proper license.**

## License Fees

*The issuance fee is included in the prices below.*

Applications for Lifetime Licenses is available on the Department's Web site under "Forms" at [www.HuntFishVA.com](http://www.HuntFishVA.com).

**Fishing licenses are valid for one year from the date of purchase.**

### Resident Fees

**Sportsman's License** (16 years or older); includes hunting license, bear deer turkey license (valid July 1-June 30), archery license, crossbow license, muzzleloader license, freshwater fishing license and trout license .....120.00

**Freshwater fish in county or city of residence \*** .....11.00

**Freshwater fish statewide \*** .....18.00

**Freshwater and saltwater statewide\*** .....30.00

**Freshwater statewide for 5 consecutive days** (not valid in designated stocked trout waters) .....11.00

**Freshwater and saltwater statewide for 5 consecutive days** (not valid in designated stocked trout waters) .....16.00

**65 and over license to fish freshwater\*** .....7.00

**Service-connected Totally and Permanently Disabled Veteran Resident Lifetime License\*** to hunt and freshwater fish (available only through Richmond Office) .....10.00

**Totally and Permanently Disabled Resident Special Lifetime License to freshwater fish \***, (only available through Richmond office) .....10.00

**Fish in designated stocked trout waters** (This license required in addition to other resident licenses if fishing in these waters) .....18.00

**Special lifetime to fish freshwater\*** or

**Special lifetime trout license to fish in designated stocked trout waters** (A valid resident fishing license is also required), both available only through Richmond office. Fees for each lifetime license are as follows:

Age up to age 44	.....255.00
Age 45-50	.....205.00
Age 51-55	.....155.00
Age 56-60	.....105.00
Age 61-64	.....55.00
Age 65 and over	.....15.00

\* A valid trout license (\$18.00 annual or lifetime) is required in addition to other resident licenses only if you are fishing in designated stocked trout waters.

### Nonresident Fees

**Freshwater fish statewide \*\*** .....36.00

**Freshwater and saltwater fish statewide\*\*** .....48.00

**Freshwater fish statewide for 5 consecutive days \*\*** .....16.00

**Freshwater and saltwater fish statewide for 5 consecutive days\*\*** (not valid in designated stocked trout waters) .....21.00

*continued on page 6*

**Fish in designated stocked trout waters** (This license required in addition to other nonresident licenses if fishing in these waters) . . . . . \$36.00

**Nonresident special lifetime license to fish freshwater** \*\* available only through Richmond office . . . . . \$505.00

**Nonresident special lifetime trout license to fish in designated stocked trout waters** (A valid nonresident fishing license is also required); available only through Richmond office . . \$505.00

\*\* A valid nonresident trout license (\$36.00 annual or \$505.00 lifetime) is required in addition to other nonresident licenses only if you are fishing in designated stocked trout waters.

## Miscellaneous Fees

**Daily Permit required at Big Tumbling Creek, Crooked Creek, and Douthat State Park Pay-As-You-Go (fee) fishing areas** (required in addition to regular resident, non-resident, or non-resident 5 day license) . . . . . \$6.50

**National Forest Permit**, for fishing in the National Forest this permit is required in addition to other fishing licenses [exceptions: senior (65 or older) and complimentary licenses] Valid for one year from date of purchase. . . . . \$4.00

**County Dip Net Permit** to take shad, herring, and mullet . . \$4.50

## National Forest Permit

All persons required to have a license (except holders of a senior citizen or complimentary license) are required to have a National Forest Permit when fishing on National Forest lands except the North and South Fork of the Shenandoah River, Skidmore Lake in Rockingham County, North Fork Pound Reservoir, Lake Moomaw, the Jackson River below Gathright Dam, and in Wilson Creek below Douthat Lake in Alleghany and Bath counties.



Falling River at Brookneal in Campbell County ©Dwight Dyke

# Reciprocal Licenses

All reciprocal license agreements listed below refer to both boat and bank anglers.

**Buggs Island (Kerr) and Gaston:** Virginia or North Carolina state fishing licenses and permits are honored on those waters lying east of Brantly Steam Plant Dam on the Dan River in Virginia and the Rt. 360 Bridge on the Staunton River of Kerr Reservoir to the Gaston Dam on the Roanoke River, including all tributary waters accessible by boat from the main bodies of the reservoirs, or from the Island Creek subimpoundment. (*Note:* North Carolina regulations apply on North Carolina portions of these waters.)

**Blue Ridge Parkway:** Virginia and North Carolina licenses are honored on all Parkway waters. (*Note:* Virginia regulations apply in Parkway waters in Virginia except where noted herein or in federal regulations).

**New River:** Virginia or North Carolina state fishing licenses and permits are honored on the mainstream portion lying between the confluence of the North and South Forks of the New River in North Carolina (Alleghany County) downstream to the confluence of the New and Little Rivers in Virginia (Grayson County).

**Potomac River:** Virginia has reciprocal license agreements for three sections of the Potomac River, one above the District of Columbia and two below the District of Columbia. License requirements are different for these sections.

*Upper Potomac River* [above Little Falls (upper border with the District of Columbia) to the West Virginia border/state line]: Resident anglers with state freshwater licenses in Virginia or Maryland may fish the Potomac River and from both banks.

*Middle Potomac and its Tidal Freshwater Tributaries* (between Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Rt. 301): Valid Virginia freshwater and saltwater (excluding county licenses), Potomac River Fisheries Commission, and Maryland Bay sport licenses are all honored on the mainstream Potomac and Maryland tributaries up to the demarcation lines (see below); all of these same licenses, except the Virginia saltwater licenses, are honored on the Virginia tributaries up to demarcation lines (see below):

Virginia tributaries up to the following demarcation lines:

Accotink Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Aquia Creek: First bridge above Aquia Harbor Marina  
Chopawansic: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Chotank: Causeway  
Dougue Creek: Rt. 235, Mt. Vernon Memorial Parkway  
Four Mile Run: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Hunting Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Little Hunting Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Neabsco: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Occoquan River: Fall Line  
Pohick Creek: Rt. 611 (Colchester Road)  
Potomac Creek: Rt. 608 Bridge  
Powells Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Quantico Creek: Rt. 1 Bridge  
Unnamed bays and tributaries accessible by gas-powered boats.

Maryland tributaries up to the following demarcation lines:

Anacostia River: downstream of Northeast Branch  
Bridge at northbound lane of Alternate Rt. 1



Bladensburg Road, and Northwest Branch Bridge at southbound lane of Rhode Island Avenue.  
Piscataway Creek: Downstream of Rt. 224 Bridge (Livingston Rd.)

Henson Run: Downstream of Oxon Hill Road Bridge  
Nanjemoy Creek: Downstream of Rt. 6 (Trappe) Bridge  
Port Tobacco Creek: Downstream of Rt. 6 Bridge  
Mattawoman Creek: Downstream of Rt. 225 Bridge  
Unnamed bays and tributaries accessible by gas-powered boats.

*Lower Potomac River* (between its mouth and the Rt. 301 Bridge): Valid Virginia saltwater (excluding County licenses), Maryland Bay sport, or Potomac River Fisheries Commission licenses are honored in the main stem. In Virginia tributaries below 301, Virginia freshwater and saltwater, and Potomac River Fisheries Commission licenses are honored.

**Note:** Maryland regulations apply for the Upper Potomac River and the Maryland Potomac River tributaries (call 1-800-688-3467 for current Maryland regulations).

**Note:** Potomac River Fisheries Commission regulations are enforced in the Potomac mainstem between the lower District of Columbia border and the mouth of the Potomac (call 1-804-224-7148 or 1-800-266-3904 for current PRFC regulations).

Waters between the Woodrow Wilson Bridge and Little Falls are controlled by D.C., and a D.C. fishing license is required.

## Freshwater/Saltwater License Lines on Tidal Waters

Persons fishing upstream of the designated lines on the following waters must have a valid freshwater fishing license while those fishing below the lines must have a valid saltwater fishing license:

\*Potomac River: Rt. 301 Bridge

Rappahannock River: Rt. 360 Bridge

Piankatank River/Dragon Run: The 1st set of power lines immediately upriver of Anderson Point

York River System (including the Mattaponi and Pamunkey Rivers): Rt. 33 Bridges

James River: A line connecting Hog Point on Hog Island (Surry County) and the downstream point of the mouth of College Creek (James City County).

Below these designated lines a freshwater or saltwater license will be valid on any tidal portion of any tributary entering the above mainstem waters.

The following waters are entirely freshwater and require a freshwater fishing license throughout: Meherrin River; Nottoway River; Blackwater River (Chowan drainage); Back Bay, Northwest River, and North Landing River and Intercoastal Waterway upstream to Great Bridge Locks; and Dismal Swamp Canal below (or South) of Deep Creek Locks.

\*See reciprocal license section on pages 6-7.

## Free Freshwater Fishing Days

June 6, 7, and 8, 2008 have been designated as Free Freshwater Fishing Days in Virginia. No fishing license of any kind will be required for rod and reel fishing in freshwater except in designated stocked trout waters.



2007 Kids n' Fishing Photo Contest



New River, Giles County ©Dwight Dyke

# General Freshwater Fishing Regulations

Fishing in inland waters must be by angling with a hook and line or rod and reel. (See exceptions for nongame fish.) A hand landing net may be used to land fish legally hooked in all waters. Any person who fishes on another's property must have the landowner's permission to do so except on designated stocked trout waters along which signs have been placed indicating that the waters are open to public fishing. No species of fish, freshwater mussel or mollusk may be taken in inland waters to be sold, except under special permits provided by law. It is unlawful to use lime, dynamite or any other substances to destroy fish, or to cast or allow noxious matter to pass into watercourses that might destroy fish or fish spawn, or to deposit trash in streams or lakes or along their banks. It is unlawful to have more than the daily creel limit of any fish in possession while afield or on the waters. The daily creel limit includes live possession of fish.

It shall be unlawful for any person, while fishing, to remove the head or tail or otherwise change the appearance of any game fish (except bluegill sunfish and bream of the sunfish family) having a daily creel or size limit so as to obscure its species or render it impracticable to measure its total original length or count the number of such fish in possession. In addition, it shall be unlawful for any person to possess or transport such altered game fish while on the water. However, the prohibition against possession and transportation in the previous sentence shall not apply to the preparation of lawfully obtained fish for immediate use as food or any lawful commercial use of such fish.

It is unlawful to take, kill, capture, or possess any threatened or endangered species.

## Virginia Game Fish

"Game fish" as defined by the Code of Virginia means and includes trout, all of the sunfish family (including largemouth bass, smallmouth bass and spotted bass, rock bass, bream, bluegill and crappie), walleye, white bass, chain pickerel, muskellunge, northern pike and striped bass.

## Stocking Fish

It is unlawful to stock any species of fish into inland waters of the Commonwealth without first obtaining written approval from the Department (private ponds excepted).

## Trout as Bait

Artificially raised rainbow trout may be sold as bait for use in the James and New rivers, and in impoundments (ponds, lakes, reservoirs), except impoundments listed as designated stocked trout waters, Lake Moomaw, and Philpott Reservoir. Persons possessing purchased rainbow trout for bait must have a valid invoice or bill of sale, specifying date of purchase, the number of trout purchased, and name of an individual or business permitted to sell trout.

## Dam Regulations

**Buggs Island:** Mechanical lure launchers may not be used within 600 yards below Buggs Island Dam.

**Walkers Dam:** Only rod and reel and hand lines permitted within 500 yards below dam. It is illegal to snag fish at Walkers Dam.

**Leesville Dam:** It shall be unlawful to fish, attempt to fish, assist others in fishing, collect or attempt to collect bait while wading, or operating, or anchoring any vessel in the waters of the Roanoke River from Leesville Dam downstream 840 feet to a permanent overhead cable. However, fishing is permitted from behind safety railings of the Department's Leesville Dam fishing structure.

**Fishways:** It shall be unlawful to fish or to collect bait from March 1 through June 15 within 300 feet of Boshers Dam Fishway on the north bank of the James River or within 150 feet of Harvell Dam Fishway on the south bank of the Appomattox River.

## Department-Owned or Controlled Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites

**A. Motors and boats.** Unless otherwise posted, the use of boats propelled by gasoline motors, sail, or mechanically operated paddle wheel is prohibited at Department-owned or controlled lakes, ponds, or streams.

**B. Method of fishing.** Taking any fish at any Department-owned or controlled lake, pond, or stream by any means other than by use of one or more attended poles with hook and line attached is prohibited unless otherwise posted, in which case cast nets may be used for collecting nongame fish for use as bait.

**C. Hours for fishing.** Fishing is permitted 24-hours a day unless otherwise posted at Department-owned or controlled lakes, ponds, streams or boat access sites.

**D. Seasons, hours and methods of fishing, size and creel limits, hunting.** The open seasons for fishing, as well as fishing hours, methods of taking fish, and the size, possession and creel limits, and hunting and trapping on Department-owned or Department-controlled lakes, ponds, streams or boat access sites shall conform to the regulations of the board unless otherwise excepted by posted rules by the director or his designee. Such posted rules shall be displayed at each lake, pond, stream or boat access site, in which case the posted rules shall be in effect. Failure to comply with posted



Diascund Creek Reservoir, New Kent County. ©VDGIF



rules concerning seasons, hours, methods of taking, bag limits, and size, possession and creel limits shall constitute a violation of this regulation

**E. Other uses.** Camping overnight or building fires (except in developed and designated areas), swimming, or wading in Department-owned or Department-controlled lakes, ponds, or streams (except by anglers, hunters, and trappers actively engaged in fishing, hunting, or trapping), is prohibited. All other uses shall conform to the regulations of the board unless excepted by posted rules.

**F. Fishing tournaments, etc.** It shall be unlawful to organize, conduct, supervise, or solicit entries for fishing tournaments, rodeos or other fishing events on lakes, ponds, or streams owned by the Department for which prizes are offered, awarded or accepted based on size or numbers of fish caught, either in money or other valuable considerations. This will not prohibit events approved by the Department which are intended to promote youth fishing or provide instruction, provided no prizes, as defined above, are awarded and no participation fees are charged.

## Special Regulations

### Smith Mountain Lake

It shall be lawful to fish using only bait with a single point unweighted bait hook (no artificial lures allowed) in that portion of Witcher Creek in Smith Mountain Lake from behind the no wake buoy line at the mouth of the cove known as Cedar Key to the back of the cove from April 15 to May 31, both dates inclusive. A single point, unweighted bait hook is defined as a hook that does not have a weight affixed to the hook. Any other weight must be attached to the line at least 12 inches above the hook (no weights below the hook).

### Lick, Bear and Laurel Creeks

It shall be unlawful to use fish as bait or to use seines, nets or traps to take fish in Lick Creek in Smyth and Bland counties, Bear Creek in Smyth County, and Laurel Creek in Tazewell and Bland counties.

# Game/Sport Fish Regulations

## Seasons

There is a continuous, year-round season for all freshwater game and nongame fish, with the following exceptions:

1. Special times and limited closures for trout (designated stocked trout waters page 15, Trout Heritage Waters page 15, Urban Program Waters page 15, Blue Ridge Parkway page 15, and Pay-as-You-Go trout waters page 17) and
2. Certain seasons for special methods to take nongame fish pages 18 and 19.

Regulations for anadromous (coastal) striped bass, alewife and blueback herring above and below the fall line, in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay; and anadromous (coastal) American shad and

hickory shad, and all other saltwater fish below the fall line, in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay, are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. For more information call 1-800-541-4646.

## Catch-And-Release Fishing

It is often necessary to release a fish because it is too small, illegal to keep, or you just don't want to take it home to eat. In some cases, releasing fish unharmed is a conservation measure that will assist in helping to maintain and build population abundance and size. The Department of Game and Inland Fisheries encourages anglers who practice catch and release fishing to use a few simple precautions when doing so. Using the tips provided below will help to assure that the fish you release will survive to bite again another day.

- When catching a fish, play it quickly and keep the fish in the water as much as possible while handling. Avoid the use of a net in landing the fish and release it quickly to avoid exhaustion.
- Handle the fish gently and as little as possible. Do not put your fingers in its eyes or gills. Avoid wiping the slime or scales off the fish; this reduces their survival by making them more likely to develop a disease or infection.
- Remove hook promptly using needlenose pliers or a "hook out" device. If the hook is too deep or hooked in the stomach or throat, cut the line and leave the hook in. The hook will dissolve without harming the fish.
- Carefully revive the fish if it appears exhausted by holding it upright and moving it gently forward so water runs over the gills. Release the fish when it begins to struggle and is able to swim.
- Do not hold fish in a live well and later decide to release it. If you are going to release a fish, do so right away.
- With a little care and by following the guidelines set above, you can give released fish a better chance of survival.
- See the "Qualifying a Trophy Fish by Length and Photo" option for Trophy Fish Awards on page 68.

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## Fall Line

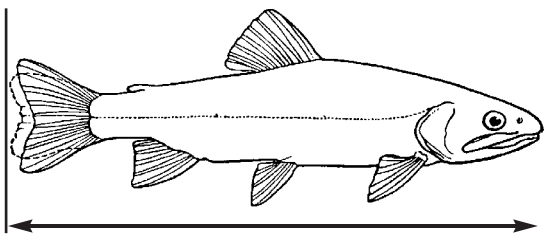
The Fall Line is defined as the following landmarks:

Rappahannock River-Rt. 1 Bridge;  
Mattaponi River-Rt. 360 Bridge;  
Pamunkey River-Rt. 360 Bridge;  
Chickahominy River-Walkers Dam;  
James River - 14th Street Bridge;  
Occoquan River-I-95 Bridge.

The tables that follow give statewide creel and length limits for major sport fish, and exceptions for major rivers and lakes. Regulations for many smaller lakes and boat access areas are posted on site, and posted regulations are in effect (see "D" under Department Owned or Controlled Lakes, Ponds, Streams or Boat Access Sites, page 8).

Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bass: largemouth smallmouth spotted		5 per day in the aggregate  No statewide length limits	<b>Lakes</b> Briery Creek Lake	No bass 14 to 24 inches, only 1 per day longer than 24 inches
			Buggs Island (Kerr)	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Claytor Lake	No bass less than 12 inches
			Flannagan Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Lake Gaston	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Leesville Reservoir	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Lake Moomaw	No bass less than 12 inches
			Philpott Reservoir	No bass less than 12 inches
			Quantico Marine Base waters	No bass 12 to 15 inches
			Smith Mt. Lake and its tributaries below Niagara Dam	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			<b>Rivers</b> Clinch River—within the boundaries of Scott, Wise, Russell or Tazewell counties	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Dan River and tributaries downstream from the Brantly Steam Plant, Danville	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			James River – Confluence of the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers (Botetourt County) downstream to the 14th Street Bridge in Richmond	No bass 14 to 22 inches, only 1 per day longer than 22 inches
New River—Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA-WV State line and its tributary Little River downstream from Little River Dam in Montgomery County (This does not include Claytor Lake which is delineated as: The upper end of the island at Allisonia downstream to the Dam)	No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches			
North Fork Holston River- Rt. 91 Bridge upstream of Saltville, Va downstream to the VA–TN state line	No bass less than 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches			

### How to Measure a Fish



Total Length

- Lay the fish on top of or beside a flat measuring rule.
- Do not lay the rule over the curvature of the fish’s body.
- Close the fish’s mouth and squeeze the tail lobes together.
- Measure from the tip of the snout to the end of the tail.

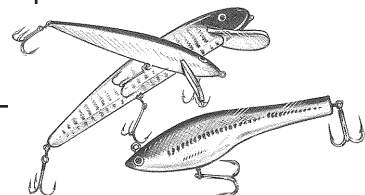
Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bass largemouth smallmouth spotted			<b><i>Rivers continued</i></b> North Fork Shenandoah River- Rt.42 bridge, Rockingham Co. downstream to the confluence with S. Fork Shenandoah at Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Potomac River - Virginia tidal tributaries above Rt.301 bridge	No bass less than 15 inches from March 1 through June 15
			Roanoke (Staunton) River--and its tributaries below Difficult Creek, Charlotte County	Only 2 of 5 bass less than 14 inches
			Shenandoah River-- Confluence of South Fork and North Fork rivers, Front Royal, downstream to the Warren Dam, near Front Royal	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			Base of Warren Dam, near Front Royal downstream to Rt. 17/50 bridge	No bass 14 to 20 inches, only 1 per day longer than 20 inches
			Rt. 17/50 bridge downstream VA--WV state line	No bass 11 to 14 inches
			South Fork Shenandoah River-- Confluence of North and South rivers, below Port Republic, downstream to Shenandoah Dam, near Town of Shenandoah	No bass 11 to 14 inches
Striped bass	landlocked striped bass and landlocked striped bass X white bass hybrids	4 per day in the aggregate  no fish less than 20 inches	Buggs Island (Kerr) Reservoir including the Staunton River to Leesville Dam and the Dan River to the Brantly Steam Plant (Danville)	<b>October 1--May 31:</b> 2 per day in the aggregate No striped bass less than 26 inches  <b>June 1--September 30:</b> 4 per day in the aggregate No length limit.
			Smith Mountain Lake and its tributaries, including the Roanoke River upstream to Niagara Dam	2 per day in the aggregate  <b>October 1--May 31:</b> No striped bass 26 to 36 inches  <b>June 1--September 30:</b> No length limit



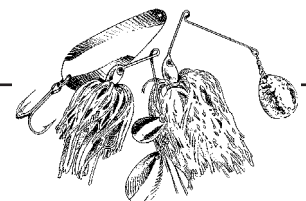


Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
<b>striped bass</b> <b>continued</b>	anadromous (coastal) striped bass above the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits shall be set by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission for recreational fishing in tidal waters		
	striped bass in the Meherrin, Nottoway, Blackwater (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and North-west rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay	2 per day  No striped bass less than 18 inches		
White bass		5 per day  No statewide length limits		
Walleye		5 per day	Flannagan, Philpott and South Holston reservoirs, and the Middle Fork Holston and South Fork Holston rivers	No walleye less than 18 inches
		No statewide length limits	Claytor Lake and New River upstream of Claytor Lake Dam	No walleye less than 20 inches
Sauger		2 per day  No statewide length limits		
Chain pickerel		5 per day  No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs	No daily limit
Northern pike		2 per day  No pike less than 20 inches		
Muskellunge		2 per day  No muskellunge less than 30 inches	New River–Fields Dam (Grayson County) downstream to the VA–WV state line, including Claytor Lake	1 per day  No muskellunge less than 42 inches

Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
Bluegill (bream) and other sunfish excluding crappie rock bass (redeye) and Roanoke bass		50 per day in the aggregate  No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
Crappie (black or white)		25 per day in the aggregate  No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Flannagan and South Holston reservoirs	No crappie less than 10 inches
Rock bass (redeye)		25 per day  No statewide length limits	Gaston and Buggs Island (Kerr) reservoirs and that portion of the New River from the VA–NC state line downstream to the confluence of the New and Little rivers in Grayson County	No daily limit
			Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with Roanoke bass  No rock bass less than 8 inches
Roanoke bass		No statewide daily limit  No statewide length limits	Nottoway and Meherrin rivers and their tributaries	5 per day in the aggregate with rock bass  No Roanoke bass less than 8 inches
Trout		6 per day  No fish less than 7 inches	See Trout Waters, pages 15-17	
Catfish	channel, white and flathead	20 per day  No length limits	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit
	blue	20 per day, only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches	All rivers below the fall line	No daily limit, except only 1 blue catfish per day longer than 32 inches
	yellow, brown, black, flat and snail bullheads	No daily limit  No length limits		



Type of Fish	Sub-type or Locations	Creel and Length Limit	Geographic Exceptions	Creel or Length Limits for Exceptions
American shad and hickory shad	James River above the fall line (14th Street Bridge), the Meherrin River above Emporia Dam, the Chickahominy River above Walkers Dam, the Appomattox River above Harvell Dam, the Pamunkey River and the Mattaponi River above the Rt. 360 bridge, and the Rappahannock River above the Rt. 1 bridge	No possession: (catch and release only)		
	below the fall line in tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm.		
	Meherrin River below Emporia Dam, Nottway River, Blackwater River, (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers, and their tributaries plus Back Bay	10 per day in the aggregate  No length limits		
Anadromous (coastal) alewife and blueback herring	Above and below the fall line in all coastal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay	Creel and length limits are set by the Virginia Marine Resources Comm.		
	Meherrin River, Nottoway River, Blackwater River (Chowan Drainage), North Landing and Northwest rivers and their tributaries plus Back Bay	No possession		
Other native or naturalized nongame fish		20 per day No length limits	Statewide	See page 18-19 for exceptions
	Threatened and endangered species	No possession		
Grass carp		No possession: (catch and release only)		
Snakehead fish	Anglers may possess a snakehead taken from Virginia waters if they immediately kill the fish and notify DGIF (see office listings on page 2 or call 1-800-770-4951. See snakehead identification on page 80)			
Nonnative (exotic) fish	See page 19			







## Trout Waters

### Designated Stocked Trout Waters

“Designated stocked trout waters” include those waters that are stocked with harvestable-sized trout and are listed by the Director in the annual Trout Stocking Plan, see Trout Guide page 50. These waters will only be considered designated stocked trout waters from October 1 through June 15 (trout license required). A trout license is not required from June 16 through September 30. Trout angling hours on designated stocked trout waters are from 5:00 a.m. until one hour after sunset. See exceptions for Trout Heritage Waters (below), Urban Program Waters (below) and Pay-As-You-Go Trout Fishing (page 17). Designated stocked trout waters are posted by the Department with appropriate “stocked trout waters” signs.

It is unlawful to fish in designated stocked trout waters after the daily creel limit of trout has been obtained or during the closed hours for taking trout. Once a trout is taken into possession by placing in the creel (basket, bucket, stringer, cooler, etc.) it becomes part of the daily creel limit and may not be released (culled). It is unlawful to feed, bait or snag trout in designated stocked trout waters. It shall be unlawful for any person fishing in designated stocked trout waters to use more than one rod, one line, and one baited hook (a treble hook is considered one hook); however, any combination of artificial lures is allowed. It shall be unlawful to use seines and nets in designated stocked waters, except that a hand-landing net to land fish legally hooked may be used in all waters.

### Trout Heritage Waters

Trout Heritage Waters selected by the Director will be considered designated stocked trout waters. They will be closed to fishing on the Friday prior to the first Saturday in April and will reopen to fishing at 9:00 a.m. on the first Saturday in April.

## Urban Program Waters

Waters selected by the Director for inclusion into the Urban Fishing Program will be considered designated stocked trout waters from November 1 through April 30 only (trout license required). A trout license is not required from May 1 through October 31. In addition trout may be creel from these waters year round and the trout creel limit is 4 per day. Once a trout is taken into possession by placing in the creel (basket, bucket, stringer, cooler, etc.) it becomes part of the daily creel limit and may not be released (culled).

## Trout Stocking Information

The Department has provided a telephone number to call for trout stocking information. This recording is updated each day at 4:00 p.m. during the stocking season. The number is 1-434-525-FISH (3474). This information is also updated daily on the Department’s Web page: [www.HuntFishVA.com](http://www.HuntFishVA.com).

## Artificial Lure Definition

Artificial lure shall include manufactured or handmade flies, spinners, plugs, spoons, and facsimilies of live animals, but shall not be construed to include artificially produced organic baits and fish eggs that are intended to be ingested. Artificial lure with single hook shall mean any single point lure (with no multiple point hooks). Where single-hook artificial lures are required, a multiple number of single-hook lures (such as dropper flies) fished in a series is permitted.

## Special Trout Regulations

**Jackson River:** There is a 12-inch minimum size limit and 4 fish per day creel limit on trout taken from Gathright Dam downstream to the Westvaco Dam at Covington in Alleghany County. All trout less than 12 inches must be immediately returned to the water and no trout less than 12 inches may be in possession while fishing this section. Look under 16-inch minimum, 2 fish per day on page 16 for the Bath County special trout section of Jackson River.

**Blue Ridge Parkway:** Fishing is prohibited from one half hour after sunset until one half hour before sunrise. No live or dead fish or fish eggs may be used as bait. Digging for worms is prohibited. Special creel limits and other regulations for Parkway waters may be posted.

**Shenandoah National Park:** Only single-point hook artificial lures may be used—no bait. On those streams open to harvest, the creel limit is 6 trout per day with a 9-inch minimum size for brook trout and a 7-inch minimum size for brown and rainbow trout. On all other streams open to fishing, catch and release regulations apply. The release of any brown trout back into any Park stream is prohibited and brown trout less than 7 inches must be disposed of within the Park but away from Park streams, roads or trails. This is an effort to limit the impacts of brown trout on the native brook trout populations. Contact the Shenandoah National Park at 540-999-3500 for the annual list of streams open to harvest.

**Reservoirs:** There is a 16-inch minimum size limit and 2 fish per day creel limit on trout taken from Moomaw Reservoir.

# Special Trout Stream Areas

Fishing in the following waters is permitted under the following regulations only:

- Only single point hook artificial lures may be used unless otherwise noted. See artificial lure definition above.
- No bait may be in possession while fishing these waters.
- All trout less than the minimum size must be immediately returned to the water unharmed. No trout less than the minimum size may be in possession while fishing in these waters.

*Note:* The special trout stream areas marked with an asterisk (\*) on page 16 require a landowner permit. For further information refer to the Trout Guide on pages 50-67 or contact your local fisheries office listed on page 2.

## 9-inch Minimum

**Big and Little Wilson Creeks (Grayson County):** That portion within the Grayson Highlands State Park and the Jefferson National Forest Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

**Cabin Creek (Grayson County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries within the Grayson Highlands State Park and the Jefferson National Forest Mount Rogers National Recreation Area.

**Conway River (Greene and Madison counties):** That portion of stream and its tributaries within the Rapidan Wildlife Management Area.

**Little Stony Creek (Giles County):** That portion of stream within the Jefferson National Forest.

**Little Stony Creek (Shenandoah County):** That portion of stream within the George Washington National Forest.

**North Fork Buffalo River (Amherst County):** That portion of the stream and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest.

**St. Mary's River (Augusta County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from the gate near the George Washington National Forest property line.

**Ramsey's Draft (Augusta County):** That portion of the stream and its tributaries within the George Washington National Forest.

## 12-inch Minimum

**Green Cove Creek (Washington County):** That portion of stream from Rt. 859 downstream to its mouth.

**Snake Creek (Carroll County):** Upstream from its mouth to Hall Ford on Big Snake Fork and to the junction of Rts. 922 and 674 on Little Snake Fork.



Brook trout; ©illustration by Spike Knuth

**Smith Creek (Alleghany County):** That portion from the Clifton Forge Dam downstream to a sign at the Forest Service boundary above the C & O Dam.

**Whitetop Laurel (Washington County):** That portion of stream upstream from the first railroad trestle above Taylor Valley to the mouth of Green Cove Creek at Creek Junction and that portion of stream upstream from the mouth of Straight Branch to a sign at the Forest Service boundary just downstream of Taylor Valley.

## 16-inch Minimum, 2 Fish Per Day

**\*Buffalo Creek (Rockbridge County):** From the confluence of Collier's Creek upstream 2.9 miles to the confluence of North and South Buffalo creeks.

**\*Dan River (Patrick County):** That portion from Talbott Dam approximately 6 miles downstream to a sign posted just upstream from the confluence of the Dan River and Townes Reservoir.

**Jackson River (Bath County):** From the swinging bridge located just upstream from the mouth of Muddy Run upstream 3 miles to the last ford on Forest Service Road 481D. **Note:** Multiple hook artificial lures are permitted.

**Pound River (Dickenson County):** That portion from a sign 0.4 miles below Flannagan Dam downstream 1.2 miles to a sign just upstream of the confluence of the Pound River and the Russell Fork River.

**Roaring Run (Botetourt County):** That portion from a sign at the third footbridge above the Roaring Run Furnace Day Use Area upstream approximately one mile to a sign at the Botetourt/Alleghany County line.

**Smith River (Henry County):** That portion of stream from signs below the east bank of Towne Creek downstream to the Rt. 666 (Trent Hill Rd.) Bridge crossing in Bassett, VA.

**South Fork Holston River (Smyth County):** That portion from a sign posted at the upper Jefferson National Forest boundary downstream approximately four miles to a sign posted 500 feet upstream of the concrete Dam at Buller Fish Culture Station.

## 20-inch Minimum, 1 Fish Per Day, Flyfishing Only

**\*Mossy Creek (Augusta County):** That portion of stream upstream from the Augusta/Rockingham county line to a sign posted at the confluence of Joseph's Spring.

## Catch and Release Only

**\*Dan River (Patrick County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries between the Townes Dam and the Pinnacles Hydroelectric Powerhouse.

**East Fork Chestnut Creek (Farmers Creek) (Grayson and Carroll counties):** That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**North Creek (Botetourt County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries upstream from a sign at the North Creek Campground.

**North Fork Moormans River (Albemarle County):** That portion of the stream within the Shenandoah National Park.

**Rapidan River (Madison County):** That portion of stream and its tributaries (including Staunton River) upstream from a sign at the lower Shenandoah National Park boundary.

**Roaring Fork (Tazewell County):** That portion upstream from the southwest boundary of Beartown Wilderness Area.

**South Fork Holston River (Smyth County):** That portion of stream from the concrete dam at Buller Fish Culture Station downstream to the lower boundary of the Buller Fish Culture Station.

**Stewart's Creek (Carroll County):** Within the boundaries of the Stewart's Creek Wildlife Management Area.

## Delayed Harvest Waters

From October 1 through May 31 fishing on the following waters is permitted under the following regulations only:

- a. Only artificial lures may be used.
- b. No trout may be in possession (catch and release only) while fishing these waters.
- c. No bait may be in possession while fishing these waters.
- d. Trout license required October 1-June 15.

**Note:** During the period of June 1 through September 30 restrictions a. through c. above will not apply and these waters are like any other designated stocked trout water (see page 15).

**Accotink Creek (Fairfax County):** That portion of stream from King Arthur Road downstream 3.1 miles to Route 620 (Brad-dock Road).

**Back Creek (Bath County):** That portion of stream from the Rt. 600 Bridge just below the Virginia Power Back Creek Dam downstream 1.5 miles to the Rt. 600 Bridge at the lower boundary of the Virginia Power Recreational Area.

**Chestnut Creek (Carroll County):** That portion of stream from the U.S. Rt. 58 Bridge downstream 11.4 miles to the confluence with the New River.

**Hardware River (Fluvanna County):** That portion of stream from the Rt. 646 Bridge upstream 2.6 miles to Muleshoe Bend as posted.

**Holliday Creek (Appomattox/Buckingham counties):** That portion of stream from the Rt. 640 crossing downstream 2.8 miles to a sign at the headwaters of Holliday Lake.

**Holmes Run (Fairfax County):** That portion of stream from the Lake Barcroft Dam downstream 1.2 miles to a sign posted at the Alexandria City line.

**North Fork of Pound and Pound rivers (Wise County):** That portion of the streams from the base of North Fork of Pound Dam downstream to the confluence with Indian Creek.

**North River (Augusta County):** That portion of stream from the base of Elkhorn Dam downstream 1.5 miles to a sign posted at the head of Staunton City Reservoir.

**Passage Creek (Warren County):** That portion of stream from the lower boundary of the Front Royal State Hatchery upstream 0.9 miles to the Shenandoah/Warren County line.

**Peak Creek (Pulaski County):** That portion of stream from the confluence of Tract Fork downstream 2.7 miles to the Rt. 99 Bridge.

**Pedlar River (Amherst County):** That portion of stream from the City of Lynchburg/George Washington National Forest boundary line (below Lynchburg Reservoir) downstream 2.7 miles to the boundary line of the George Washington National Forest.



**Roanoke River (Roanoke County):** That portion of stream from the Rt. 760 Bridge (Diuguids Lane) upstream 1.0 miles to a sign posted at the upper end of Green Hill Park.

**Roanoke River (City of Salem):** That portion of stream from the Rt. 419 Bridge upstream 2.2 miles to the Colorado Street Bridge.

**South River (Augusta County):** That portion of stream from Second Street Bridge upstream 2.4 miles to the base of Rife Loth Dam in the City of Waynesboro.

## Pay-As-You-Go Trout Fishing

These waters are stocked regularly with catchable trout throughout the fee permit season. Anglers are required to buy a daily permit (\$6.50) in addition to the applicable resident or non-resident license. Trout licenses are not required to fish in the areas during the fee permit season, but they are required during the non-permit period of the year. No fishing is permitted in any fee fishing area for five days proceeding the opening day (1st Saturday in April). Fishing shall begin at 9:00 a.m. on opening day at all fee areas. After opening day, fishing times will be as posted. The daily creel limit is 6 trout. Fishermen are required to use separate stringers. Bait or artificial lures may be used as posted. Children-only fishing area (where applicable) regulations are posted.

**Big Tumbling Creek:** Area includes Big Tumbling Creek within the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through September 30. Directions: From Saltville, Va. turn left off of Rt. 107 onto Rt. 91 (1/4 mile); then right onto Rt. 634; bear left onto Rt. 613 and proceed 3.5 miles; then right onto Rt. 747 to the area.

**Crooked Creek:** Area is located within the Crooked Creek Wildlife Management Area in Carroll County. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through September 30. Directions: From Galax, Va. take Rt. 58 east to Woodlawn, Va.; then take Rt. 620 south approximately 4.0 miles to the area.

**Douthat State Park:** Area includes Douthat State Park Lake and Wilson Creek above the lake to the park boundary and downstream to the lower USFS boundary. A daily permit is required from the first Saturday in April through June 15 and from September 15 through October 31. A children-only area is provided. Also, children 12 years and under can fish without a permit in the entire area if under the direct supervision of a permitted adult and the combined creel limit for both adult and child/children does not exceed 6 trout. Directions: Located 7 miles north of Clifton Forge on Rt. 629 which can be accessed by Exit 27 off of I-64.



# Nongame Fish, Reptile, Amphibian and Aquatic Invertebrate Regulations

## General

It shall be unlawful to take, possess, import, cause to be imported, export, cause to be exported, buy, sell, offer for sale or liberate within the Commonwealth any wild animal unless otherwise specifically permitted by law or regulation. Albino reptiles and amphibians and domestic animals may be imported, possessed, and sold. A list of domestic animals and the Department's official listing of "Native and Naturalized Fauna of Virginia" is available from the Richmond and regional offices.

## Native and Naturalized Species Possession Limits (Personal Use & Not for Sale):

Amphibians and Reptiles - 5

Nongame Fish and Aquatic Invertebrates - 20

### Exceptions:

1. Threatened and endangered species, candy darter, eastern hellbender, diamondback terrapin, and spotted turtle-no take
2. Carp, bowfin, longnose gar, mullet, yellow bullhead, brown bullhead, black bullhead, snail bullhead, white sucker, northern hogsucker, gizzard shad, threadfin shad, white perch, yellow perch, alewife and blueback herring [see limits under Anadromous (coastal) in table on page 14], stoneroller (hornyhead), fathead minnow, golden shiner, and goldfish-unlimited
3. See page 13 for catfish and page 14 for anadromous (coastal) shad and herring limits.
4. Fish bait: minnows and chubs (Cyprinidae), salamanders (less than 6 inches), crayfish, and hellgrammites – 50 in aggregate unless said person has purchased fish bait and has a receipt specifying the number of individuals purchased by species. **Note:** Madtoms, crayfish and salamanders cannot be bought or sold.
5. Bullfrogs and snapping turtles – 15 per day. Cannot be taken from the banks or waters of designated stocked trout waters. Taking bullfrogs with a gig or bow and arrow requires a hunting license. Taking turtles by hook and line requires a fishing license.
6. Native amphibians and reptiles, that are captured within the Commonwealth and possessed live for private use and not for sale may be liberated under the following conditions:
  - a. Period of captivity does not exceed 30 days;
  - b. Animals must be liberated at the site of capture;
  - c. Animals must have been housed separately from other wild-caught and domestic animal; and
  - d. Animals that demonstrate symptoms of disease or illness or that have sustained injury during their captivity may not be released.

## Methods to Capture or Take

### General Methods:

- Except as provided for under "Other Methods" and except in any waters where the use of nets is prohibited, the species listed in the previous section (Native and Naturalized Species-Possession Limits) may only be taken by hand, hook and line, with a seine not exceeding 4 feet in depth by 10 feet in length, an umbrella type net not exceeding 5 by 5 feet square, small minnow traps with throat openings no larger than 1 inch in diameter, cast nets, and handheld bow nets with diameter not to exceed 20 inches and handle length not to exceed 8 feet.
- Gizzard shad and white perch may also be taken from below the fall line in all tidal rivers of the Chesapeake Bay using a gill net in accordance with Virginia Marine Resources Commission recreational fishing regulations.
- Bullfrogs may also be taken by gigging or bow and arrow and from private waters by firearms no larger than .22 caliber rim-fire.
- Snapping turtles may be taken for personal use with hoop nets not exceeding 6 feet in length with a throat opening not exceeding 36 inches.

### Other Methods:

**Trot Lines, juglines or set poles** may be used to take nongame fish and turtles provided they are not baited with live bait (worms are permissible), except on waters stocked with trout and within 600 feet of any dam. Live bait other than game fish may be used on trot lines to take catfish in Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Montgomery, Pulaski and Wythe counties, and in the Clinch River, in Russell, Scott and Wise counties.

Any person setting or possessing the above equipment shall have it clearly marked by permanent means with his or her name, address, and telephone number, and is required to check all lines and remove all fish and animals caught each day.

**Bow and Arrow** may be used to take common carp, northern snakehead, and gar (fishing license required) during day and night hours (24 hrs.), except from waters stocked with trout. Spearguns and poisoned arrows are prohibited. Snakehead must be immediately killed and reported to VDGIF.

**Snagging, grabbing, snaring, gigging and the use of a striking iron** are legal methods to take nongame fish in certain waters in certain counties as follows (see table pages 13 & 14 for certain nongame fish limits):

1. In the waters of the following counties [except public impoundments, the Roanoke (Staunton) and Dan Rivers, and those waters stocked by the Department]: Amelia, Appomattox, Brunswick, Campbell, Charlotte, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Goochland (except James River), Greenville, Halifax, Louisa, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Pittsylvania, and Prince Edward.
2. From April 1 through May 15 and October 1 through November 30 during the daytime in the following waters: Buchanan

County, all waters except Dismal River; Grayson County, New River; Lee County, Powell River; Russell County, Clinch River; Scott County, Clinch River and its tributaries; Tazewell County, Dry Run Creek; Wise County, Clinch River; and Washington County, Middle Fork and South Fork of the Holston rivers. Creel limit: 20 suckers per day.

3. Noosing suckers (daytime only) from December 1 through February 29 in Highland County.
4. Snagging for carp and suckers during April in Wolf and Big Walkers Creek in Giles County.
5. Snagging for carp and suckers in Walkers Creek, Wolf Creek and the North Fork of the Holston in Bland County.
6. Bow and arrow and gigging for carp year round in the Shenandoah River.
7. Shooting with a rifle for suckers and carp from April 15 to May 31 during daylight hours in the shoals of the Clinch River within the limits of Scott County except, that it shall be unlawful to shoot fish on Sunday or within the limits of any town, or from any bridge. Fishing license is required. Creel limit: 20 per day.

**Dip nets** may be used to take shad, herring, mullet and suckers except in designated stocked trout waters, Department-owned or controlled lakes, in certain waters where anadromous shad and herring can not be possessed (see page 14 for shad and herring limits), and as restricted below. The user and all helpers (regardless of age) must have dip net permits (\$4.50) or valid fishing license. Permits are valid in the county's inland waters for which issued. All other fish species taken are to be immediately returned to the water alive.

**Herring:** (see table page 14 for river herring limits) Commercial herring dipping is prohibited in Diascund Creek in New Kent County and in Ward's, Chippokes, and Powell's Creek north of State Hwy. 10.

**Suckers:**

Limit of 20 per day.

Season: February 15- May 15.

Dip nets shall not be more than 6 feet square. Dip net permits are not required for taking suckers in Brunswick, Greensville and Sussex counties.

**Nets and Seines** are prohibited while fishing in designated stocked trout waters and for taking fish from Department-owned or controlled lakes (except as otherwise posted) (see table page 13 & 14 for certain nongame fish limits). Only those nets and seines listed under general methods to capture or take nongame fish (above) can be used in the public waters of the Roanoke (Staunton) and Dan Rivers in Campbell, Charlotte, Halifax and Pittsylvania counties, and in the City of Danville. Seines, nets, and traps are also prohibited in Lick Creek in Smyth and Bland counties, Bear Creek in Smyth County, Laurel Creek in Tazewell and Bland counties, and Hungry Mother Creek above Hungry Mother Lake in Smyth County. However, these restrictions do not prohibit the use of a hand-landing net to land fish legally hooked. Seasons and local restrictions governing the use of nets and seines are complex. Persons deciding to try this type of fishing should consult with the conservation police officer stationed in the area to be fished.

## Areas Restricted

**Designated Stocked Trout Waters:** Nongame fish may be harvested only by hook and line in designated stocked trout waters.

## New Anadromous (Coastal) River Herring Creel Limits: See table on page 14 for alewife and blueback herring limits

**Mollusks:** Unlawful to take mussels and the spiny riversnail (*Isofluvialis*) in the Tennessee drainage in Virginia (Clinch, Powell and the North, South and Middle Forks of the Holston rivers and tributaries). It shall be unlawful to take mussels in the James River and tributaries west of Rt. 29, in the entire North Fork of the Shenandoah River, and in the entire Nottoway River.

**Salamanders:** Unlawful to take salamanders in Grayson Highlands State Park and on National Forest lands in the Jefferson National Forest in those portions of Grayson, Smyth and Washington counties bounded on the east by Rt. 16, on the north by Rt. 603 and on the south and west by Rt. 58.

## Non-Native (Exotic Animals)

A special permit is required and may be issued by the Department, if consistent with the Department's fish and wildlife management program, to import, possess, or sell the following non-native (exotic) amphibians, fish, mollusks, aquatic invertebrates, and reptiles: giant or marine toad, tongueless or African clawed frog, barred tiger salamander, gray tiger salamander, blotched tiger salamander, smallmouth buffalo, bigmouth buffalo, black buffalo, piranhas, bighead carp, grass carp or white amur, red shiner, silver carp, black carp, rudd, tench, ruffe, snakeheads, air-breathing catfish, tilapia, swamp eel, tubenose goby, round goby, zebra mussel, New Zealand mudsnail, quagga mussel, rusty crayfish, Australian crayfish, Chinese mitten crab, alligators, caimans, brown tree snake, crocodiles, and gavials.

Anglers may legally possess snakehead fish taken from Virginia waters provided they immediately kill the fish and notify VDGIF (See office listings on page 2 or call 1-800-770-4951. See Identification information on page 80.)

All other non-native (exotic) amphibians, fish, aquatic invertebrates and reptiles not listed above may be possessed, purchased, and sold; provided, that such animals shall be subject to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations, including those that apply to threatened/endangered species, and further provided, that such animals shall not be liberated within the Commonwealth.

# Fish Consumption Advisories

Fishing provides many benefits including food and recreational enjoyment. Many anglers keep, cook and eat their catches. Fish are routinely monitored for contaminants by the Department of Environmental Quality. While the vast majority of the state's waters have no dangerous levels of contaminants, sometimes the fish in certain waters are found to contain potentially harmful levels of chemicals. When this happens, the Department of Health issues warnings for the affected bodies of water. Because the Health Department lowered their PCB advisory level and the list of advisories often changes several times in a given year, VDGIF is no longer going to try and publish a current list in this booklet. For specific, up-to-date fish consumption advisories, please go to the Health Department Web site, [www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/publichealthtoxicology/advisories/](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/epidemiology/publichealthtoxicology/advisories/) or call the Health Department at 804-864-8182.

Anglers should realize that they may still fish these waters and enjoy excellent recreational fishing. Below is a section on cleaning and cooking your fish, which will help reduce contamination levels in fish you eat.

## Cleaning and Cooking Your Fish

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and most other organic contaminants usually build up in a fish's fat deposits and just underneath the skin. By removing the skin and fat before cooking, you

can reduce the levels of these chemicals. Mercury collects in the fish's muscle and cannot be reduced by cleaning and cooking methods. To reduce PCBs and other organics in your fish, consider cleaning and cooking your fish as described below.

- Remove all skin.
- Trim off all the fat, especially the belly flap, along the lateral line on each side of the fish, along the back, and under the skin.
- Bake or broil trimmed fish on a rack or grill. Cooking does not destroy the contaminants in fish, but heat from cooking melts some of the fat in the fish and allows some of the contaminated fat to drip away.
- Discard any drippings. Do not eat them or use them for cooking other foods or for preparing sauces or gravies.

**IMPORTANT: The meal advice included in this information is based on fish that have been skinned, trimmed and cooked properly.**

Also remember that larger and older fish tend to collect more contaminants, and fatty fish (such as channel catfish and carp) tend to collect PCBs and other organic chemicals. Eating smaller, younger fish and avoiding fatty species can help limit your exposure. Your exposure depends not only on the contaminant levels in the fish, but also the amount of fish you eat.

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Online

At

[www.HuntFishVA.com](http://www.HuntFishVA.com)

With just the click of the mouse you can open a world of outdoor opportunities by visiting the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries' official Web site. If you enjoy fishing and are looking to catch a whopper, then this is one address that you will want to save as a favorite. Along with the latest in outdoor news, you will find important information including a complete listing of Department WMAs, lakes, rivers and streams, maps, up-to-date trout stocking locations, live streaming video and most importantly how and where to go in Virginia to have fun in the great outdoors.